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A new model of epidermal culture for the surgical treatment of vitiligo.

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BACKGROUND: Vitiligo can be successfully treated with grafts of autologous cultured epidermal cells. **OBJECTIVE:** To evaluate the efficacy of autologous grafting of epidermal cells, cultured by an original method, in the treatment of localized vitiligo refractory to other therapies. **METHODS:** Autologous normally pigmented skin was used to culture keratinocytes and melanocytes on a supporting layer of biomaterial (Laserskin), which was grafted directly onto achromatic skin after de-epithelialization with liquid carbon dioxide. The percentage area of repigmentation was calculated by image analysis. **RESULTS:** Initial repigmentation of the treated areas was observed 1 month after treatment. Repigmentation continued to increase for 3 months after grafting. Follow-up at 3, 6, 12, and 18 months showed almost complete repigmentation in six out of 11 cases. In four other patients, 40-71% of the grafted achromatic area was repigmented. In one patient, repigmentation was impeded by sepsis. **CONCLUSIONS:** The method was found to be effective in the treatment of localized vitiligo refractory to other treatments. The therapeutic procedure was simple, reproducible, and easy to use.

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